The vegetation, therefore, is
/12 cont./ the high and dense
137 forest of the "hydro-hygro-megathermic type," similar to that of the Rio Negro. The palm trees merit special attention. There are many varieties, sometimes following the course of the water and at other times dispersed through the woodland, which the forest dwellers use for various purposes.

We noted among the palms of "terra-firme" the tucum (astrocárium /Astrocaryum/ vulgare, Mart. or astr. tucumóides), the bacaba (oenocárpus bacaba, Mart.), the açaí /assai/ (eutérpe olerácea, Mart.), the inajá (Maximiliána régia, Mart.), the pupunha (Guilerma /Guilielma/ speciosa), the paxiúba (iriartea exorrhiza or settígera, Mart.). Among those of the inundated places, the javarí (astrocárium javarí), the miritĺ or buritĺ (maurítia vinifera and m. flexuosa), the caraná (maurítia caraná), the jará (leopoldinia maior), the piaçaba (leopoldinia piassába, Wal.), the tucumã (astrocarium tucuman, Mart.). The climbing palm, the jacitára or Kamwarri, of the genus Desmoncus, is of great use in the indigenous basketry.

• 134 In general there is only a small superficial humous layer,
137 from which emerges the imposing millenary forest, and after that the sandy or clayey strata. A primary consequence of such a small humous base is that the trees have very superficial roots, and therefore the storms frequently knock them down, producing true clearings in the forests. A second consequence is that the
[241] land becomes unproductive after three or four years of the primitive native agriculture.

136 /13/ The rivers and igarapés are populated by many species of fish, which constitute one of the principal foods of the native.

The Amazonian fauna is not rich in varieties, and less so quantitatively. Besides the dangerous felines, the onça /jaguar/ (felix /Felis/ onça) and the gato macarajá /ocelot/ (felix pardalis and felix mucura, Neuw.), there are few animals that the native ordinarily can find and that offer him meat for food: the veado /deer/ (gen. cervus), the paca (coelógenys paca), the cotia /agouti/ (dasyprocta aguti, Lin.), queixada and caetitu /species of peccary/ (dicotyles labiátus, tayassú albirostris, and tayassú tayassú, Lin.), the anta /tapir/ (tapírus americánus,

6: Moser and Tayler E,N-5 (1960-1961) 1967 SQ19 Tucano SQ19

originally worked wild rubber for one of the great rubber barons and they had earned their clothing in exchange for their labours. Their torn trousers were only a veneer of the civilized world, for here they seemed to come into their own element: they talked to each other in Tukano; they became alert to the forest they knew so well.

We were living in a closed world of limited horizons, on either side the thick forest, ahead the river and above a ribbon of sky. Giant emerald kingfishers with orange heads and long black beaks darted out in front of us. Myriads of white butterflies rose off the sandbanks, settling on our bodies to enjoy the salty sweat. On occasions we saw a delicate wader like a sandpiper bob up and down on the sand near the water's edge. The water had now changed colour, no longer black but a deep wine red, as it flowed over the pale sandy bed. We supposed this colour was due to the high iron content in the rock.

Our first major halt was made at Pedro's house. He had established himself as a tradesman between the Indians on the upper Piraparaná and the civilized rubber gatherers of Mitú. He bought *farinha* from the Tukano in exchange for fish-hooks, salt and cloth. His magnificent thatched house was a foretaste of what we were to see. But the occupants with their dishevelled clothes, the sheets of crude rubber hanging from the beams and the iron cooking pots, seemed a strange paradox.

We unloaded all our equipment, sending Candilo and his assistant back to Mitú with *Vencedor* and the larger outboard motor. With him went one of our valuable cameras whose shutter had jammed during the first day, and a note to Nestor in Bogotá, warning him of the difficulties he would encounter and advising him again to travel as light as possible. Of the now depleted party, José and Uriel were to be our guides throughout the journey; Matias would ensure that we reached the first Indian habitation on the Piraparaná; while Bernavez went on ahead in his dugout canoe carrying two drums of our fuel. We were joined by one more man, old Miguez, who brought his own small Indian canoe. From now on we would have to make double journeys with *El Diablo* until we reached Indians who would carry our loads in their own canoes.

Next morning, while Donald and Horacio repacked much of the kit, Brian and José went ahead with a small load in *El Diablo*. The Ti narrowed and then divided; here our route towards the Piraparaná portage lay up a tiny tributary, the Caño Berada or Fish Bow Creek, as it was known to the Indians. With our arrival in the Berada, a mere stream flowing out of the undergrowth, our whole mode of travel changed. We could no longer use the motor; instead we had to push the boat upstream. We spent the rest of the day waist-deep in water, clambering over submerged timbers and occasional rocks; an Indian out in front cut a way through the fallen trees.

Christmas Day saw us cross two rock ledges where the boat had to be com-